



## California Sportfishing Protection Alliance

*"An Advocate for Fisheries, Habitat and Water Quality"*

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7 September 2008

Ms. Mary E. Serra, Senior WRC Eng.  
Ms. Anne Olson, WRC Eng.  
Waste Discharge to Land Unit  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Central Valley Region  
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6144

VIA: Electronic Submission  
Hardcopy if Requested

RE: Revised Tentative Waste Discharge Requirements For Syngenta Seeds, Inc.,  
Woodland Seed Processing Facility, Yolo County

Dear Mesdames Serra and Olson,

The California Sportfishing Protection Alliance (CSPA) has reviewed the proposed Waste Discharge Requirements (Permit) for Syngenta Seeds, Inc., Woodland Seed Processing Facility and submits the following comments.

The proposed Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) for Syngenta Seeds Inc. state in Finding No. 3 that the Discharger has been discharging seed processing wastewater illegally to leachfields and to surface waters, Willow Slough, since 1972; 36 years.

The wastewater up to approximately 500,000 gallons/year is characterized in proposed WDR Findings No. 10, 13 and 14, and summarized in Finding No. 36, as containing high salt concentrations (TDS up to 2,314 mg/l) as well as EC, total nitrogen, chloride, magnesium and sodium at levels exceeding water quality objectives. Finding No. 13 shows that numerous chemicals, such as Pectinase, Tsunami and Physan 20, are used at the facility to control microbial diseases that may be discharged with the wastewater.

In addition to the wastewater discharge reverse osmosis brine and boiler blowdown are discharged to a septic system permitted by the Yolo County Environmental Health Department (Finding No. 19).

Groundwater at the site is approximately 25 feet below ground surface (Finding No. 31).

Groundwater beneath the site has been shown to be degraded and exceeds water quality objectives for electrical conductivity, dissolved solids, nitrate nitrogen, and sodium (Findings No. 32 and 36). Finding No. 32 concludes that since the discharge has been ongoing for only 4-years, degradation may be caused by neighboring agricultural

practices. This is contrary to the fact the Discharger has been operating illegally for 36 years as presented in Finding No. 3. The discharge of reverse osmosis brine and boiler blowdown alone would be sufficient to be the cause of a significant portion of the groundwater degradation. The conclusion in Finding No. 32 is not based on the facts presented in the Findings.

Compliance with California Code of Regulations Title 27 is not discussed in the proposed WDR. CCR Title 27, Section 20090 exempts wastewater discharges if the following preconditions are met: WDRs have been issued, the discharge is in compliance with the Basin Plan and the waste is not hazardous. The discharge has likely caused or at a minimum contributed to exceedance of Basin Plan water quality objectives for electrical conductivity, dissolved solids, nitrate nitrogen, and sodium and therefore does not meet the test of being in compliance with requirements of the Basin Plan. The discharge has also not been shown to be in compliance with the Basin Plan incorporated Antidegradation Policy (68-16). The Antidegradation Policy requires that an allowance for any degradation must be shown to be in the interest of the people of the state, must not exceed water quality standards and that the discharge must provide best practicable treatment and control (BPTC) of the discharge. None of the tests of the Antidegradation Policy have been met. The proposed WDR should not be adopted. A Cleanup and Abatement Order should be issued immediate cessation of all wastewater discharges until the Discharger applies for, a Title 27 permit is issued, and can comply with the requirements of CCR Title 27.

Thank you for considering these comments. If you have questions or require clarification, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Jennings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "J".

Bill Jennings, Executive Director  
California Sportfishing Protection Alliance